“The Home of Mordecai Andrews, Built Circa 1699, is Still Standing Today”
By: Carla Welsh (nee Seitz), a 7th great-granddaughter of Mordecai

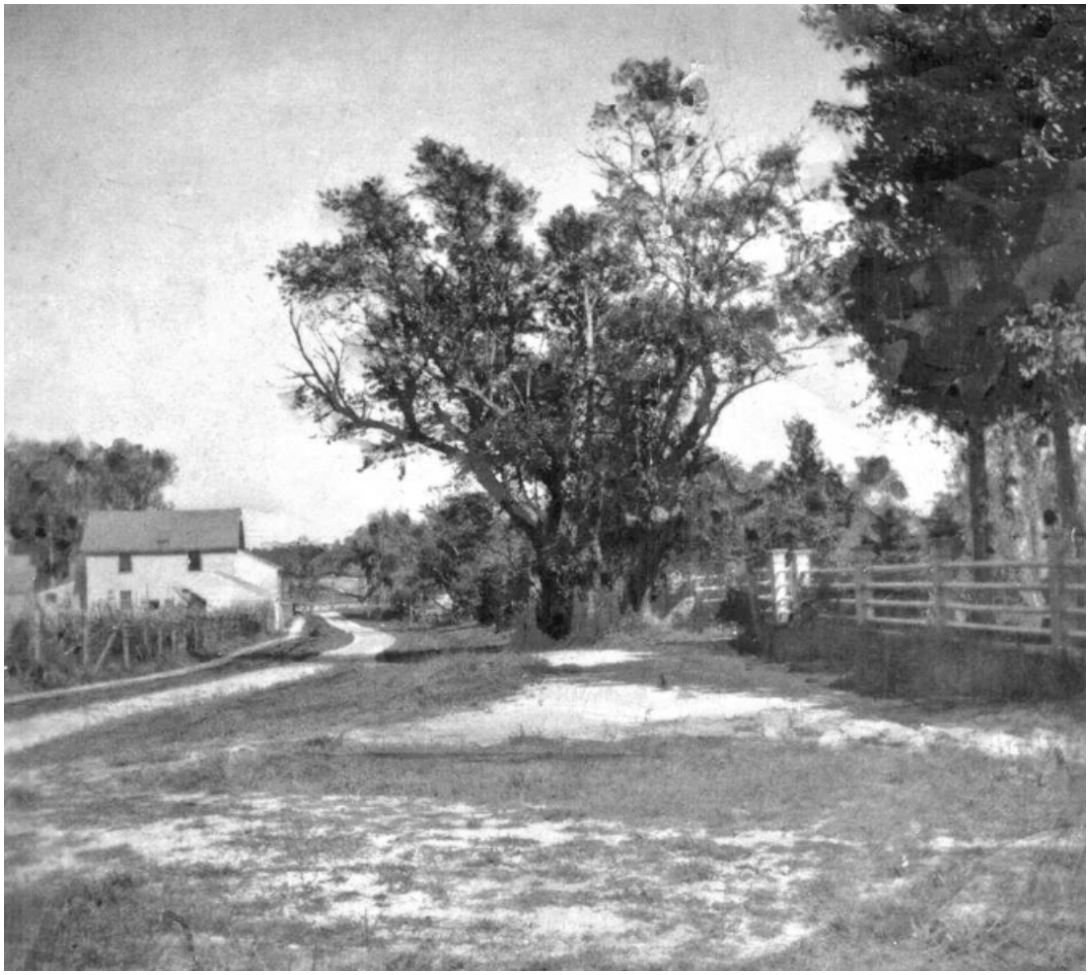
The home of Mordecai Andrews, son of Samuel Andrews and Mary Wright, still stands today, and is located on Bartlett Lane, Tuckerton, New Jersey. It is known as the Andrews-Bartlett House. I believe it is currently in possession of Tuckerton Seaport. At the time of Mordecai’s death, he owned roughly 900 acres of land. Amongst Mordecai’s land purchases, was a purchase of 430 acres of land from William Biddle, but the deed was destroyed in a fire that burnt down Mordecai’s home, so confirmation of the destroyed deed was made 20 JUN 1709. Mordecai’s home is said to have originally been built in 1699, and after the fire, it was rebuilt around the remaining fireplace. While building his home, Mordecai is said to have lived in a “cave.” It was not a real cave, but rather, a primitive type shelter that Quakers built to live in, while building their homes, that they referred to as “caves.” These “caves” were similar to a dakota fire hole, but big enough to sleep in. The cave was probably within a few hundred feet of where Mordecai built his home on present day Bartlett Lane. An abstract of the deed, transcribed by the author, is as follows:

This Indenture made the 20th day of June, Anno Dom 1709, between William Bedle of the County of Burlington and Province of West New Jersey, Gent. of the one part, and Mordecai Andrews of Little Egg Harbour, in the said County and Province of the other part, whereas the said William Bedle having formerly sold to the said Mordecai Andrews the Land and Plantation whereon he the said Mordecai now dwells and accordingly conveyed it to the said Mordecai by a Deed of Bargaine and Sale, but the said Mordecai Andrews having had his house accidentally burned, wherein the said deed was also consumed by fier [fire]*, and the said deed not being recorded, he the said Mordecai has no written Ordence to prove a Right to his said Plantation. Therefore, now witnesseth these presents that the said William Bedle for and in consideration of the sum of 70 pounds, currant money of the said Province, which the said William doth hereby acknowledge to have Recorded, and from the said Mordecai whereof he does hereby acquit and discharge the said Mordecai, his heirs, Executor, Administrators, and every of them by these presents doth grant, bargaine, sell, ___, and confirm unto the said Mordecai Andrews and his heirs and assigns 430 ackers of land lying at or near ye Little Egg Harbour, being the land whereon the said Mordecai Andrews now dwells. Beginning at a pine for a corner by a brook bounding his former survey and runs thence Northeast ___ a point North 92 chaines ye Samuelle Jennings corner, by whose line runs Southeast ___ a poynt South, cross the brook called Jennings, his brook, from an Indian fishing place to the bog, then along the bay unto the mouth of the said Jennings his brook, and ye is the same his first named brook…*
Signed: William Biddle
Witnesses: Wm. Biddle, Jr., John Hancok, Daniel Leeds
Recorded: 20 JUN 1711

SOURCE: West Jersey, Province of New Jersey, Deed Book AAA:350, Bedle to Andrews, 20 JUN 1709, New Jersey State Archives. The deed can also be viewed from any Family History Center or affiliated library computer: FamilySearch.org (https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/007901117 : accessed 31 MAR 2021), DGS #7901117, image 191.

For more information, please see the book I wrote about my ancestry back to Mordecai Andrews and beyond, which FamilySearch.org uploaded to their "books" section, entitled, "A Registry of the Southern New Jersey descendants of Peter Wright, one of the first English settlers of Oyster Bay, Long Island, including the Headley and Mathis families, et. al., of Little Egg Harbor Township and Tuckerton, New Jersey," by Carla Welsh. I also have it uploaded to Archive.org. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania also has a copy: Call Number: CS 71 .W95 2022.

For more information about Quaker "cave" homes, see an article I wrote entitled, "Jane Lownes, One of the First Caucasian Settlers of Springfield Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania (now Delaware County), and Her Cave Dwelling in Which She Called Home," by Carla Welsh, uploaded to Archive.org. LINK: https://archive.org/details/jane-lownes-cave-story/mode/2up
This was accessioned into the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's collection; Call Number: Fa 929.2 L954w 2021. I won a Delaware County Preservation Award for the article. I am not a descendant of Jane Lownes, but I found her story fascinating, since she, too, lived in a "cave," much like my family did, and I enjoy hiking, exploration, and research of the area.



Historical undated photo of the Andrews-Bartlett House, Bartlett Lane, Tuckerton, NJ [Tuckerton Historical Society]. The castor oil mill is reportedly to the left.